

VZCZCXR07351

OO RUEHBC RUEHKUK RUEHROV RUEHTRO
DE RUEHKH #1746/01 3381211
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
O 031211Z DEC 08
FM AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM
TO QHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2465
INFO RUEHEE/ARAB LEAGUE COLLECTIVE
RUCNFUR/DARFUR COLLECTIVE
RUEHGG/UN SECURITY COUNCIL COLLECTIVE
RHMFIS/SJTFC HOA

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 KHARTOUM 001746

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR AF A/S FRAZER, SE WILLIAMSON, AF/SPG
NSC FOR HUDSON AND PITTMAN
DEPT PLS PASS USAID FOR AFR/SUDAN
ADDDIS ABABA ALS FOR USAU

E.O. 12958: DECL: 11/03/2013

TAGS: PGOV PREL EAID MCAP KPKO UNSC SU

SUBJECT: A/S FRAZER,S NOVEMBER 2 MEETING WITH SPLA CHIEF OF STAFF OYAI DENG AJAK

Classified By: CDA Alberto M. Fernandez for reasons 1.4(b) and (d)

¶1. (SBU) On November 2 in Juba, SPLA Chief of Staff Oyai Deng Ajak and a small coterie from the Southern military's senior-most ranks reviewed for AF A/S Frazer the SPLA's perception of the peace and its own transformation process three years after the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA). Ajak offered an upbeat assessment of the SPLA's capabilities, noting his confidence that the SPLA could deter a ground attack on the South. He was effusive in his praise for USG training assistance, noting he has personally seen a dramatic change at the command-level from Juba down through the SPLA's ten divisions. Integration of Other Armed Groups and GOSS financial constraints previously had impeded the SPLA's process of transformation. However, the GOSS will be taking over responsibility, in 2009, for the care and feeding of 32,000 demobilized SPLA still on military pay-rolls. Ajak noted that this was still not enough, and greater cost-savings must be achieved through additional, more expedient, DDR efforts.

¶2. (SBU) Progress on CPA implementation as it directly impacts the SPLA, he noted, was grim by contrast. National-level institutions critical to implementing the Security Arrangement remain gridlocked. So significant is the impasse within the Joint Defense Board (JDB) and Ceasefire Political Commission that they now habitually refer issues to the Presidency. The Joint Integrated Units, rather than serving as the &finest army of Sudan,&s future8 remain unfunded. According to Ajak, GNU Minister for Finance Awad Al Jaz continues to undermine presidential-level funding commitments, despite repeated requests for assistance from the JDB. While Ajak noted he has monthly contact with his SAF counterparts via the JDB and other mechanisms, the frequency of communication is undercut by the near-certainty of back-stabbing. &A lot is happening that indicates that behind closed doors a decision has been taken that will make lasting friendship impossible,⁸ the Chief of General Staff said of his northern countrymen.

¶3. (SBU) SPLA Director for Operations MG Piang underscored for A/S Frazer,s delegation that demarcation of the 1956 border is likely the next flashpoint for the SAF and SPLA. &If the North carves out the oil fields as they intend,⁸ Piang warned, &we will no longer have a CPA.⁸ &The National Congress Party is losing confidence in the SAF,⁸ he continued, &and building NISS (National Intelligence and Security Service) as a separate army now numbering 30,000.⁸ Piang envisions a scenario in which such a paramilitary force could be used in the South,&s oil fields as effectively as they were used to defend Omdurman in May. The Director for Operations further maintained that NISS will look toward LRA

and disaffected Southerners to launch destabilization operations against the South.

¶14. (SBU) Beyond external provocation by Khartoum, the SPLA maintained that the largest threats to Southern Sudan remained cattle rustling and tribal clashes. Ajak believes that insecurity within the South's oil field areas is directly attributable to Khartoum-funded militias supported by either the NISS or SAF. Khartoum further manipulates both the LRA and numerous nomadic groups along the 1956 North/South border, he maintained, in order to impede GOSS efforts to disarm the South's civilian population.

¶15. (SBU) Turning to Darfur, Ajak maintained that the SPLA should not content itself with a stabilizing Southern Sudan; it should, and is willing to, engage on problems of a national nature. The South cannot view things merely from a regional perspective -- the Southern state of Western Bahr el Ghazal continues to be impacted by events in South Darfur. Ajak noted that he has already discussed such issues with the SPLM and Kiir. (NOTE: Ajak personally has very strong relationships with SLM/A's Ahmed Abdul Shafie and Abdewahid Nur. END NOTE). Ajak reviewed for the Assistant Secretary the past efforts of the SPLA to engage on the Darfur issue. Piang helmed the SPLA team that participated on the joint SAF/SPLA committee on Darfur, and wrote the plan for a joint SPLA/SAF presence in the war-torn region.

¶16. (SBU) According to the Chief of General Staff, Bashir shelved the plan indefinitely, swayed by SAF objections to a model that placed the SPLA in control over troops in Darfur. (NOTE: Ajak maintains that such a set-up is required for

KHARTOUM 00001746 002 OF 002

credibility and the exercise of effective command and control over a SAF infantry that largely hails from Darfur itself. END NOTE.) The Chief of General Staff underscored to A/S Frazer his belief that the time had come to revive such a plan under the auspices of Kiir's outreach, as First Vice President of the Republic, on Darfur. The Chief of General Staff said he believes the SPLA could spare up to one division-sized contingent of soldiers, noting that the late SPLM Chairman John Garang had once argued for a 20,000-man presence, divided equally between SAF and SPLA. Responding to queries about areas where the SPLA may need support to implement such a plan, Ajak noted logistics and communications needs were paramount.

¶17. (C) Comment: Despite General Ajak's confidence, the SPLA still has a long way to go before it becomes a truly professional military force that is capable of successfully defending the South or engaging in peace keeping in Darfur.

Providing a reality check on SPLA ambitions is important. U.S. assistance to the SPLA's transformation requires continuing to build capacity and providing additional support including discussions of air defense capability.

¶18. (U) This cable was cleared by Assistant Secretary Frazer following her departure.

FERNANDEZ